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SUBJECT: MALI BLOCKS TAIWAN PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY OF
DEMOCRACIES MINISTERIAL

REF: STATE 151150

1. (SBU) Ambassador had several conversations with officials at the Foreign Ministry about Taiwan Foundation for Democracy (TFD) participation in the NGO portion of the Bamako Community of Democracies ministerial. In a November 2 discussion, Dr. Oumar Makalou the coordinator of the civil society portion of the Bamako ministerial, told the Ambassador that Foreign Minister Ouane was aware of the exclusion of the two TFD members, and had told Makalou that the Malian government would neither invite nor issue visas to any participant holding a Taiwan passport.

2. (SBU) After lower level officials professed no knowledge of the matter, in a meeting November 5 on a number of issues with Foreign Minister Ouane, Ambassador made the points in reftel, and asked Ouane to reconsider the case of the two TFD participants. In reply, Ouane noted that the convening group meetings in Washington had managed many difficult issues regarding participation at the Bamako ministerial, and the TFD case fell into this category. He added that participation from Taiwan was a very sensitive matter for the Government of Mali, and in the end, Mali agreed to include the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy as a participating organization in the NGO summit, but to exclude anyone carrying a Taiwan passport. We note from reftel that one of the proposed TFD participants is an American citizen.

3. (SBU) Comment: Although FM Ouane agreed to reflect further on this issue, we do not believe the Malians will reconsider the decision to exclude Drs. Lin and Yang. China is an increasingly important development partner for the Government of Mali, and in the end, this relationship trumps any cloud that may hang over the Bamako ministerial as a result of the exclusion of participants from Taiwan.
McCulley